6-6-95

Editor,

A recent letter to the editor, from a newcomer to town, made reference to the "Celebrate Diversity" and "Create Community" bumper stickers that have been distributed by Citizens Project and displayed by many individuals. The viewpoint of the letter writer claims that "celebrating diversity" means all behaviors must be celebrated and that "creating community" requires only one set of fundamental beliefs. This is an example of the rhetoric used to twist the meaning of the humanistic theme of "celebrating diversity" and "creating community" into the perversion of celebrating any and all behaviors! This is not what "celebrating diversity" represents, nor does "creating community" mean only one ideology rules.

The theme "Celebrate Diversity" refers to the concept that there is significant value for a community to not only tolerate, but to celebrate, any and all perspectives which *enrich* the human relationships of a community. It only asks your willingness to understand the experiences of others, without necessarily adopting those experiences as your own (if you so choose). At the same time, it requires that we never deny to someone their civil or human rights based on their experiences (assuming those experiences are not criminal conduct and do not violate the civil or human rights of others).

Therefore, we do not "celebrate the diversity" of the experience of the pedophile, rapist, or child abuser, whose behaviors are criminal. We do not "celebrate the diversity" of the Nazi, Klansman, or any group whose actions promote criminal behavior or whose beliefs (if acted out) violate the civil and human rights of others.

"Creating community" requires only that we recognize the responsibility we have to each other in a community which can "celebrate diversity". A community that is strengthened in the seemingly paradoxical context of valuing both our sameness and our differences.

Sincerely,

Jim Musante
Colorado Springs